

CLAIMS

1) A method of conveying articles, comprising the steps of feeding an article (5) to a pocket (35) travelling along a given path (P); retaining said article (5) by gripping means (28, 29) associated with said pocket (35); and feeding the article (5) along said path (P) in a given direction (D1) by means of said pocket (35); the method being characterized by releasing said article (5) from said gripping means (28, 29), and pushing the article (5) against a locating member (34) of said pocket (35) as said article (5) is advanced.

2) A method as claimed in Claim 1, characterized by retaining the article (5) by means of said gripping means (28, 29) once the article (5) rests against said locating member (34).

3) A method as claimed in Claim 1, characterized in that said locating member (34) is located downstream from the gripping means (28, 29) with respect to the feed direction (D1).

4) A method as claimed in Claim 3, characterized by pushing said article (5) against said locating member (34) by means of push means (45) located along said path (P).

5) A method as claimed in Claim 4, characterized in that said push means are folding devices (45).

6) A method as claimed in Claim 5, characterized

in that said articles are blanks (5); each blank (5) comprising panels (11, 12, 13, 14, 15), tabs (16, 17, 18, 19, 20) and flaps (23, 25).

7) A method as claimed in Claim 6, characterized
5 in that the tabs (16, 17, 18, 19, 20) are bounded with respect to the panels (11, 12, 13, 14, 15) by first crease lines (21, 22), and the flaps (23, 25) are bounded with respect to the tabs (17, 18) by second crease lines (24, 26); said second crease lines (24,
10 26) being substantially parallel to the feed direction (D1).

8) A method as claimed in Claim 7, characterized in that the blank (5) has a longitudinal axis (A); the method conveying each blank (5) with its longitudinal
15 axis (A) crosswise to the feed direction (D1).

9) A method as claimed in Claim 7, characterized in that said blank (5) comprises a first pair of flaps (23, 25) upstream with respect to the respective pocket (35), and a second pair of flaps (23, 25) downstream
20 with respect to the pocket (35); the method folding the first pair of flaps (23, 25) by means of said folding devices (45) when said blank (5) is released from said gripping means (28, 29).

10) A method as claimed in Claim 9, characterized
25 by folding the second pair of flaps (23, 25) by means of said folding devices (45) when the blank (5) is retained by said gripping means (28, 29).

11) A method as claimed in Claim 1, characterized

by feeding each article (5) between the respective pocket (35) and a guide (6), located along a portion of the path (P), when said gripping means (28, 29) are deactivated.

5 12) A conveyor for conveying articles (5), the conveyor comprising a pocket (35) movable in a direction (D1) along a given path (P), and gripping means (28, 29) associated with said pocket (35) to retain said article (5); and the conveyor being
10 characterized by comprising folding devices (45) located along the path (P) and cooperating with said gripping means (28, 29) and with a locating member (34) associated with said pocket (35).

13) A conveyor as claimed in Claim 12,
15 characterized in that said locating member (34) is located downstream with respect to the gripping means (28, 29).

14) A conveyor as claimed in Claim 13,
characterized in that said locating member (34)
20 comprises stop members (37) for said article (5).

15) A conveyor as claimed in Claim 12,
characterized in that said folding devices (45) are rotary folding devices (45) selectively positioned contacting said article (5).

25 16) A conveyor as claimed in Claim 15,
characterized in that said folding devices (45) rotate about an axis (44) perpendicular to said direction (D1).

17) A conveyor as claimed in Claim 16, characterized in that said articles are blanks (5); each blank (5) comprising panels (11, 12, 13, 14, 15), tabs (16, 17, 18, 19, 20) and flaps (23, 25); said
5 folding devices (45) folding said flaps (23, 25) with respect to the rest of the blank (5); and said gripping means (28, 29) comprising a plate (28) and suction holes (29) for retaining one (13) of said panels (11, 12, 13, 14, 15).

10 18) A conveyor as claimed in Claim 17, characterized in that the tabs (16, 17, 18, 19, 20) are bounded with respect to the panels (11, 12, 13, 14, 15) by first crease lines (21, 22), and the flaps (23, 25) are bounded with respect to the tabs (17, 18) by second
15 crease lines (24, 26); said pocket (35) retaining said blank (5) with said second crease lines (24, 26) substantially parallel to said direction (D1).

19) A conveyor as claimed in Claim 18, characterized in that said blank (5) comprises a first
20 pair of flaps (23, 25) upstream with respect to the respective pocket (35), and a second pair of flaps (23, 25) downstream with respect to the pocket (35); each folding device (45) comprising a first lobe (46) for folding a flap in the first pair of flaps (23, 25), and
25 a second lobe (46) for folding a flap in the second pair of flaps (23, 25).

20) A conveyor as claimed in Claim 12, characterized by comprising a guide (6) located along a

portion of the path (P).

21) A conveyor as claimed in Claim 20, characterized by comprising a drum (2) rotating about an axis (3) of rotation and having a number of gripping
5 members (4) equally spaced about the axis (3) of rotation; each gripping member (4) having a said pocket (35).

22) A conveyor as claimed in Claim 21, characterized in that said guide (6) comprises a face
10 (39) facing said drum (2).

23) A conveyor as claimed in Claim 22, characterized in that said folding devices (45) are located between the guide (6) and the drum (2).

24) A conveyor as claimed in Claim 22,
15 characterized in that said guide comprises first grooves (40) extending parallel to the path (P) along said face (39) and for housing the folded flaps (23, 25).

25) A conveyor as claimed in Claim 22,
20 characterized in that said guide (6) comprises second grooves (41) extending parallel to the path (P) and for partly housing the locating member (34).